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SUBJECT: CHINA WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES OF ICC ARREST WARRANT
FOR BASHIR

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.
4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: China is concerned that the International Criminal Court (ICC) will issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir that will make the Sudanese Government less cooperative and further destabilize the situation in Sudan, MFA West Asian and North African Affairs Department Sudan Office Deputy Director Wang Yi told PolOff January 15. China is urging Sudan to show restraint if the ICC issues the arrest warrant, Wang said. While acknowledging that pressure on the Sudanese Government has produced results, China urges the United States to consider the consequences of an arrest warrant and apply the "appropriate level of pressure" on Sudan. End summary.

¶2. (C) MFA West Asian and North African Affairs Department Sudan Office Deputy Director Wang Yi briefed PolOff on Chinese Special Representative on Darfur Ambassador Liu Guijin's January 5-13 visit to Russia, Sudan and Ethiopia January 15. Ambassador Liu met with Russian Special Envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov in Russia and with President Bashir, Presidential Assistant Nafie al Nafie and UN/African Union (AU) Chief Mediator Bassole in Sudan.

Possible Consequences of Arrest Warrant for Bashir

¶3. (C) Wang said China was concerned that the ICC would soon issue an arrest warrant for Bashir, , a step that could make the Sudanese Government less willing to cooperate with the international community. He said an arrest warrant could also have a negative impact on deployment of the UNAMID hybrid force, implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and 2009 national and legislative elections. He argued that the situation in Gaza had increased Sudanese ill will toward the West and that an ICC arrest warrant could spark a violent backlash. Wang said Ambassador Liu urged Sudan to show restraint if the ICC issued the arrest warrant for Bashir.

Sudan Making Progress

¶4. (C) Wang argued that Sudan had made real efforts to improve the situation in Darfur, pointing to the Sudan Peoples' Initiative (a month-long forum convened by the Government in October 2008 to discuss the Darfur issue) and recent progress on UNAMID deployment as signs of the Government's sincerity. He argued that the AU had a similar view and shared China's concerns that an arrest warrant could reverse the progress that has been made.

Apply Pressure, But Not Too Much

15. (C) Wang stressed that China and the United States shared the common goals of peace and stability, full implementation of the CPA and deployment of UNAMID troops. He noted, however, that China and the United States had different approaches to resolving the Darfur crisis and urged the United States to maintain a "cautious attitude."

Acknowledging that pressure on the Sudanese Government has produced results, Wang argued that P5 members should continue to put the "appropriate level" of pressure on Sudan but not so much as to "exceed Sudan's capacity to bear it." Applying too much pressure could backfire and make the Sudanese Government more intransigent, Wang warned. He urged the United States to push for a delay of the ICC indictment and "carefully consider" the possible consequences of an ICC arrest warrant for Bashir.

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